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RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 4117  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0064  
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA 0057  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0130  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0988  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMPI](#) [SY](#) [FI](#)  
SUBJECT: FINNISH RESPONSE - CONDEMNING ARREST AND  
ARRAIGNMENT OF SYRIAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS

REF: SECSTATE 11025

Classified By: POLCHIEF GREG THOME FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) PolChief delivered subject demarche Feb. 5 to Deskoff for Syria and Lebanon Keijo Karjalainen. Karjalainen thanked us for the detailed information on the plight of Raid Seif and the Damascus Declaration National Council members. He said that the GoF is now following these cases closely within the EU. The resident EU Ambassadors met in Damascus and agreed that the Syrians' handling of this issue was abusive and disturbing. All EU capitals have received the French draft demarche, and the GoF supports the "stronger" language that it includes. However, Karjalainen reported, there is division within the EU regarding the French proposal to use equally strong language in a public statement. Several EU members -- Finland included -- are concerned that a strong public statement could jeopardize the safety of Damascus group members. Finland has not reached a national position on this aspect of the question, however, and is likely to support EU consensus.

12. (C) Meanwhile, Karjalainen noted, Finland plans no bilateral contacts with the SARG until Sept. or Oct., when a Director-General level delegation will visit Syria and Lebanon.  
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